



Federal Communications Commission
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau
Washington, D.C. 20554

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JUN 14 2005

03-1231

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The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
U. S. House of Representatives
529 14th St., NW, Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20045-1928

RECEIVED

JUN 27 2005

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

Dear Congresswoman Norton:

Thank you for your letter of May 24, 2005, to the Federal Communications Commission (Commission or FCC), on behalf of your constituent, Ms. Ashley Barber, expressing her concerns regarding Video Relay Service (VRS), a form of telecommunications relay service (TRS). Your correspondence was forwarded to the Commission's Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau for handling.

Ms. Barber's letter states, "Right now, many hearing people have different companies to work with their cell phones and get a better deal. While, Deaf people have limit choices with VRS companies to provide VRS interpreters to 2 different videophone machines."

Ms. Barber seems concerned that only two videophone devices are on the market to access VRS. The Commission understands that there are actually several videophone products available. Further, there are currently eight VRS providers, and the VRS market is far more competitive than the traditional TRS (text-based TTY) service, whose users generally must use the TRS provider chosen by their state.

Ms. Barber's letter may also relate to the interoperability of equipment used to access VRS. This issue is currently pending before the FCC. On February 15, 2005, the California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing filed a Petition for Declaratory Ruling on Interoperability, requesting that the FCC prohibit any VRS provider that receives compensation from the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) Fund from purposely restricting its deaf and hard-of-hearing customers to a single VRS provider via the software or hardware of their VRS equipment or through exclusivity agreements with those customers. On March 1, 2005, the FCC released a Public Notice (DA 05-509) seeking public comment on this issue. Comments were due April 15, 2005, and reply comments were due May 2, 2005. The issue of interoperability will be addressed in a future order.

No. of Days rec'd
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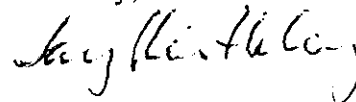
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The Commission encourages Ms. Barber to actively participate in proceedings before the Commission to ensure that her opinions are expressed and considered fully. The Commission has available a Consumer Information Registry e-mail service that will deliver to subscribers customized information about the FCC's actions and related developments in telecommunications, disability issues, and other communications services. To subscribe to this e-mail service, Ms. Barber should go to <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/contacts/>, click on subscribe, and fill in the requested information in order to receive future updates on the topics chosen.

The Commission also invites Ms. Barber to visit the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau's Internet web site at <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb> or the Commission's Home Page located at <http://www.fcc.gov>.

A copy of Ms. Barber's correspondence has been placed in the public record for this proceeding. The Commission appreciates your inquiry. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jay Keithley".

Jay Keithley
Deputy Bureau Chief
Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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*COVERS D.C. ISSUES

May 24, 2005

Ms. Diane Atkinson
Congressional Liaison Specialist
Federal Communications Commission
445 12TH ST SW RM 8-C453
Washington, DC 20554-0001

Dear Ms. Atkinson:

I am writing on behalf of Ashley Barber, 4618 4th ST NW, Washington, DC 20011, who states she has the following problem:

Request that her comments be considered regarding the Videophone Relay Service for the Deaf.

I am also enclosing a copy of materials that I have received from regarding this matter. I would greatly appreciate your checking into this and advising me of your findings. Any information you can provide will help me in properly responding to my constituent.

Kindly address your reply and any questions you may have to LaVonnia Johnson at my Congressional District Office, 529 14TH ST NW STE 900, Washington, DC 20045-1928. Thank you for your attention to my request.

Sincerely,

Eleanor H. Norton

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

ehn:lj

Enclosure

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*CEB
Policy Disab.
1149*

Ashley Barber
4618 4th St NW
Washington, DC 20011

Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton
National Press Building
529 14th Street, N.W., Suite 900
Washington, D.C. 20045

Dear Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton,

I need your help because I want Federal Communication Commission to listen my comments about Videophone Relay Service.

Everything is fine but one specific problem. The problem I want to see solved by making Deaf people equal as hearing people when they use different ways of communication technology. Right now, many hearing people have different companies to work with their cell phones and get a better deal. While, Deaf people have limit choices with VRS companies to provide VRS interpreters to 2 different videophone machines.

I would like to ask you to listen to my comments and make sure that FCC will understand Deaf people's communication needs.

Sincerely yours,


Ashley Barber